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ABSTRACT

This report presents data for the 1999-2000 school year on 86 of 91 private choice schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. These schools enrolled 7,430 of 7,913 Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) students. These enrollment data were compared with enrollment data for all 99,990 students in the Milwaukee school system. Religious schools enrolled most (62%) of the low-income choice students, leading to more integration in the MPCP schools than in the system as a whole. Continuing a pattern that preceded the MPCP, nonreligious private schools in Milwaukee were less integrated than Milwaukee's public schools. Adding religious schools to the MPCP, as was done in 1998, has meant more integration in the choice schools. In 1999-2000, half of the students in the public schools attended racially isolated schools (where 90% of the enrollment is either "minority" or white), compared with 30% at the religious private schools. Appendixes contain enrollment figures for the nonreligious and religious MPCP schools. (SLD)

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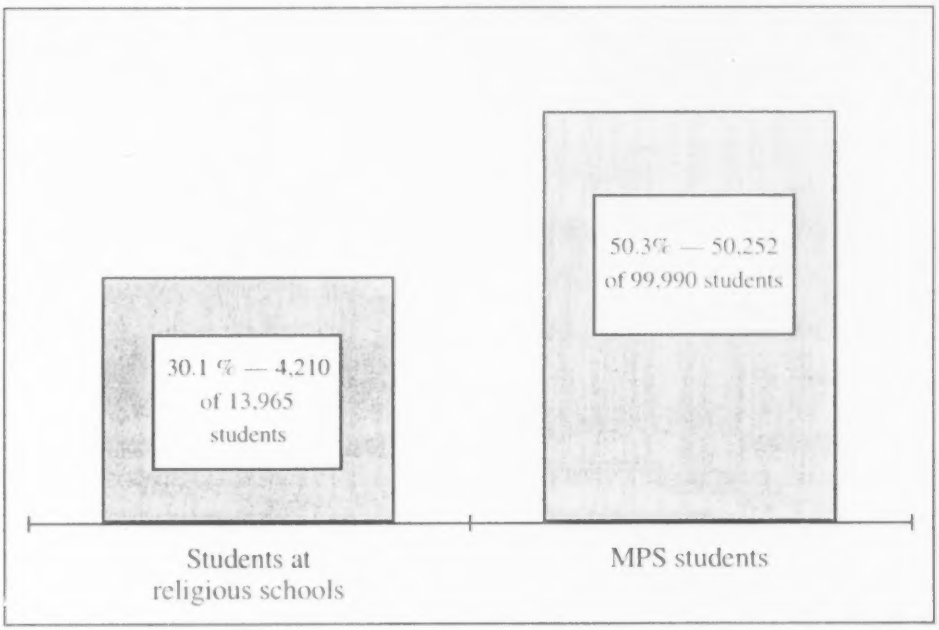
The Impact of School Choice on Integration in Milwaukee Private Schools

Howard L. Fuller, Ph.D., and George A. Mitchell[1]

SUMMARY

In 1998, the Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld a law expanding the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) to include religious schools. Opponents said this would increase racial segregation. In fact, the opposite occurred. Adding religious schools has meant more integration in choice schools than in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). In 1999-2000, half of MPS students attended racially isolated schools (where 90% or more of the enrollment is minority or white[2]) compared to 30% of students at religious choice schools.

Figure 1. Students in racially isolated MPS schools and in private religious schools in the MPCP (1999-2000).



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BACKGROUND

The MPCP gives K-12 education vouchers to low-income Milwaukee families. It is the best available test of how targeted school choice might affect integration: of the country's three tax-supported K-12 voucher programs — others are in Cleveland and Florida — it has existed the longest (10 years), has the largest enrollment (almost 8,000 students), and has the broadest array of religious (59) and non-religious (32) schools.

Questions about the impact of school choice on integration have been fueled by claims that choice will increase racial isolation. In a 1996 lawsuit, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) said that the "actual and foreseeable consequences" of adding religious schools would be more segregation.[3] NAACP President Kweisi Mfume, at an anti-voucher rally last year in Detroit, said: "We can't allow our nation's schools to be divided once again by skin color..."[4]

In 1999, the Cox Newspapers Washington Bureau said that a "new report from Harvard University reinforces fears that vouchers could speed up the decline of racial integration in public schools..." The article attributed this view to North Carolina Governor James Hunt, saying he "was 'very concerned' that vouchers could accelerate trends spotlighted in 'Resegregation in American Schools,'" a report by Harvard University's Civil Rights Project.[5]

Because a majority of MPCP students are of color, we predicted choice in Milwaukee would have a different impact on integration. Specifically, we assumed that letting these students attend religious schools, where most students were from higher income white families, would increase integration.[6]

First year results. In December 1999, we reported that after religious schools were added to the MPCP[7]:

- Fifty-eight per cent of all MPS elementary students in 1998-99 were in racially isolated schools, compared to 38% of students at a sample of K-8 Catholic schools.
- Minority-white enrollment at all private schools in Milwaukee changed from 27%-73% in 1994-95 to 36%-64% in 1998-99.[8]

While these findings strongly suggested that adding religious schools had increased integration, the data did not reflect school-by-school information for most choice schools.

THIS STUDY

In this report, we present data for the 1999-2000 school year on 86 of 91 private choice schools that enrolled 7,430 of 7,913 MPCP students. We compared enrollment at these schools with data for all 99,990 students in MPS schools. We found that:

- Religious schools enrolled most (62%) of the low-income choice students, leading to more integration in MPCP schools than in MPS.
- Continuing a pattern that preceded the MPCP, non-religious Milwaukee private schools are less integrated than MPS schools.

A Caveat

Integrated schools are desirable. However, in Milwaukee programs dominated by that goal have had a detrimental impact on many African Americans intended as beneficiaries.[9] Further, many Milwaukee schools with student bodies mainly of color have records of helping students: stay in school; improve academic achievement; and graduate from high school. Such schools include Messmer High School, St. Joan Antida High School, Urban Day School, Harambee Community School, Bruce-Guadalupe Community School, and others.

The purpose of this report, therefore, is neither to elevate nor diminish the importance of integration. Rather, its sole purpose is to respond factually to claims by voucher opponents that school choice increases segregation.

MPS Enrollment

Table 1. MPS Enrollment, 1999-00[10]

	Schools	Students	White	Minority
Grades K-8	143	74,215	12,202	62,013
High School	18	21,541	4,818	16,723
Alternative & Partnership Schools (K-12)	51	4,234	584	3,650
TOTAL	212	99,990	17,604	82,386
Percent of Total	100%	100%	18%	82%

Table 2 shows that half of these MPS students attended racially isolated — or "intensely segregated" — schools in 1999-00. Racial isolation was highest in grades K-8 and in alternative and partnership schools. It was lowest in high schools.

Table 2. Racial Isolation in MPS Schools

	Racially Isolated Schools	All Students	Students at Racially Isolated Schools	Racially Isolated Students (as % of all)
Grades K-8	76 of 143	74,215	39,943	53.8%
High Schools	6 of 18	21,541	7,960	37.0%
Alternative & Partnership Schools	31 of 51	4,234	2,349	55.5%
TOTAL	113 of 212	99,990	50,252	50.3%

PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

We surveyed the 91 private K-12 schools in the MPCP at the start of the 1999-00 school year. We requested data on racial and ethnic enrollment and whether students were enrolled in the choice program. Based on responses, we have data on 86 of 91 schools, which enrolled 7,430 MPCP students, or 94% of all MPCP students.[11]

Table 3. 1999-00 Enrollment at 86 of 91 MPCP Schools

	Number of Schools	Total Students	White	Minority
Grades K-8	76	13,679	5,570	8,109
High School	7	4,287	2,816	1,471
Other	3	445	5	440
Total	86	18,411	8,391	10,020
Percent of Total	100%	100%	46%	54%

Religious schools. Fifty-six of the 86 responding MPCP schools are religiously affiliated: 38 Catholic; 10 Lutheran; 6 Christian nondenominational; 1 Muslim; and 1 Hebrew. These schools enrolled nearly 14,000 students in 1999-00.

Table 4. Enrollment at 56 Religious MPCP Schools

CHOICE		
White	981	
Minority	3,656	
Subtotal Choice		4,637
NON-CHOICE		
White	7,008	
Minority	2,320	
Subtotal Non-Choice		9,328
TOTAL		**13,965**

As Table 4 shows, a sizeable majority (75%) of non-choice students in religious schools were white. In contrast, most (79%) of MPCP students at those schools were from racial and ethnic minorities. A school-by-school analysis (Table 5) shows the resulting levels of racial isolation in religious choice schools.

Table 5. Racial Isolation in 56 MPCP Religious Schools

	Racially Isolated Schools	All Students	Students at Racially Isolated Schools	Racially Isolated Students (as % of all)
GRADES K-8				
Catholic	9 of 33	8,132	2,446	30.1%
Lutheran	4 of 10	1,016	357	35.1%
Other	6 of 6	575	575	100.0%
Subtotal Grades K-8	*19 of 49*	*9,723*	*3,378*	*34.7%*
HIGH SCHOOLS				
Catholic High Schools	1 of 5	3,871	461	11.9%
OTHER[12]	2 of 2	371	371	100.0%
TOTAL	**22 of 56**	**13,965**	**4,210**	**30.1%**

Non-religious schools. Enrollment patterns at non-religious Milwaukee schools must be seen in the historical context of these schools. Decades before enactment of the MPCP, these schools primarily enrolled students of color. As Mikel Holt explains, this is because many of these schools owed their existence to concern among African American and Hispanic parents about low educational achievement in MPS.[13] This explains why most students at non-religious schools that entered the MPCP in the early 1990s were African American or Hispanic. Separately, Wisconsin's official school choice evaluator from 1990 to 1995, University of Wisconsin Professor John Witte, says, "there were no obvious negative consequences of [this] racial and ethnic cultural emphasis."[14] Indeed, as we stated previously, many of these schools have exemplary records.

Twenty-nine non-religious MPCP schools responded to our survey. Using publicly available information, we estimated enrollment information for a 30th school, Marva Collins. Racial and ethnic enrollment at these schools differs markedly from those at religious schools.

Table 6. Enrollment at 30 Non-Religious MPCP Schools

CHOICE		
White	98	
Minority	2,695	
Subtotal Choice		2,793
NON-CHOICE		
White	304	
Minority	1,349	
Subtotal Non-Choice		1,653
GRAND TOTAL		4,446

Table 7 shows racial isolation in these non-religious MPCP schools.

Table 7. Racial Isolation in 30 MPCP Non-Religious Schools

	Racially Isolated Schools	All Students	Students at Racially Isolated Schools	Racially Isolated Students (as % of all)
Grades K-8	22 of 27	3,956	3,484	88.1%
High School	1 of 2	416	210	50.5%
Other (Grades 7-9)	1 of 1	74	74	100.0%
TOTAL	24 of 30	4,446	3,694	83.1%

RACIAL ISOLATION — MPCP vs. MPS

Table 8 shows that the addition of religious schools has led to a lower level of racial isolation in MPCP private schools than in MPS.

Table 8. Racial Isolation in MPCP and MPS Schools, 1999-00

	Students	Students at Racially Isolated Schools	Racially Isolated Students (as % of all)
Non-Religious Private	4,446	3,694	83.1%
Religious Private	13,965	4,210	30.1%
ALL PRIVATE	18,411	7,904	42.9%
MPS	99,990	50,252	50.3%

OTHER RESEARCH

Several recent studies discuss whether choice programs targeted at low-income families will increase integration.[15] Jay Greene (The Manhattan Institute) has identified results in Cleveland similar to those that we found in Milwaukee. Robert Fairlie (University of California-Santa Cruz) found that racial isolation might be reduced when "private vouchers are targeted towards low-income families, such as the experimental programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland." Hamilton Lankford and James Wyckoff (State University of New York-Albany) say that if "enhanced choice [were] targeted to low-income families," the result "may well [be] increased integration." These findings were presented May 22 at Columbia University Teachers College, at a conference ("School Choice and Racial Diversity") co-sponsored by Harvard's Civil Rights Project and The National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education (Teachers College).

FUTURE STUDIES

The 2000-01 school year will be the third in which religious schools have participated in the MPCP. Enrollment in the program might reach 10,000 students. More than 100 schools have indicated an interest in participating. We intend to gather data on the 2000-01 year enrollment and compare it with MPS enrollment information. Whether choice continues to increase integration in Milwaukee's private schools will depend on factors yet to be determined. What is clear, so far, is that voucher critics who claimed choice here would increase segregation were wrong.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 — Enrollment at Non-Religious MPCP Schools, 1999-00
Appendix 2 — Enrollment at Religious MPCP Schools, 1999-00

NOTES

[1] Fuller is Director, Institute for the Transformation of Learning. Mitchell is a consulting research associate at the Institute.

[2] The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University uses the 90% threshold to define an "intensely segregated" school (Orfield, Gary, and Yun, John, "Resegregation in American Schools," June 1999, The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University).

[3] After the 1995 Legislature expanded the MPCP to include religious schools, opponents sued to block the expansion. The Wisconsin Supreme Court enjoined the expansion during the resulting litigation.

Plaintiffs included NAACP attorneys William H. Lynch and James Hall, whose complaint was filed on August 14, 1996, in Dane County (Wisconsin) Circuit Court, Case No: 98-CV-1889. On June 10, 1998, the Supreme Court upheld all aspects of the expanded program and dismissed the NAACP complaint.

[4] Antonucci, Mike, "The Education Intelligence Agency Communiqué," November 15, 1999, http://members.aol.com/educintel/eia.

[5] Mollison, Andrew, "Voucher system not good for diversity, report says; North Carolina governor claims danger to school integration," The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, June 13, 1999. Governor Hunt's remarks were incorrect. He has declined to correct them, a tendency common among voucher critics. See Fuller, "The Saturation Campaign of Lies and Distortions about Educational Vouchers," March 2000, presented at the Second Annual Symposium on Educational Options for African Americans, Milwaukee, March 2000.

[6] Mitchell, "Impact of MPCP on School Integration," unpublished, January 1997. Also, Fuller and Mitchell, "The Impact of School Choice on Racial Desegregation," Current Education Issues No. 99-3, June 1999, Institute for the Transformation of Learning.

[7] Fuller and Mitchell, "The Impact of School Choice on Racial and Ethnic Enrollment in Milwaukee Private Schools," Current Education Issues No. 99 - 5, December 1999 (revised), ITL.

[8] We classified students as "white" and "minority," where "white" excludes Hispanics and "minority" including African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, and others. The source for these data was annual census reports of Milwaukee children aged 4-19, issued by the Milwaukee Public Schools. This current report does not include comparable overall data for 1999-2000, as the MPS census for 1999-00 has not been issued yet.

[9] Fuller, "The Impact of the Milwaukee Public School System's Desegregation Plan on Black Students and the Black Community (1976-1982)," doctoral thesis, Marquette University, May 1985; Mitchell, "An Evaluation of State-Financed School Integration in Metropolitan Milwaukee," Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Report, Vol. 2, No. 5, June 1989. Also see Holt, Mikel, Not Yet "Free At Last," Institute for Contemporary Studies, Oakland CA, 2000.

[10] MPS, "Enrollment by Ethnic Categories and Schools as of September 17, 1999."

[11] Eighty-five schools responded to our survey. Based on publicly available data, we estimated enrollment for one additional school — Marva Collins Preparatory School —, which declined to respond to the survey. Five other MPCP schools also did not respond (Louis Tucker Academy, Milwaukee Montessori School, Parklawn Christian School, Salam School, and St. Peter Immanuel Lutheran School).

[12] Two religious schools (Believers in Christ and Clara Muhammad) have students in both elementary, middle, and high school grades.

[13] Holt, Not Yet "Free At Last".

[14] Witte, John, The Market Approach to Education — An Analysis of America's First Voucher Program, Princeton University Press, 2000.

[15] See: (i) Greene, Jay (The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research), "Choosing Integration"; (ii) Lankford, Hamilton, and Wyckoff, James (State University of New York-Albany), "Why Are Schools Racially Segregated? Implications for School Choice Policies"; and (iii) Fairlie, Robert (University of California-Santa Cruz), "Racial Segregation and the Private/Public School Choice."

Appendix 1 — Enrollment at Non-Religious MPCP Schools, 1999-00[1]

School	Grade	Students	W	M	CW	CM	NCW	NCM
Academic Solutions Center for Learning	7-9	74	1	73	1	73	0	0
Agape Center of Academic Excellence	K-6	227	1	226	1	57	0	169
Alex's Academic of Excellence	K-5	86	0	86	0	84	0	2
Bessie M. Gray Preparatory Academy	K-3	184	4	180	3	45	1	135
Blyden Delaney Academy	1-8	73	0	73	0	73	0	0
Bridging the Gap	K-3	7	0	7	0	7	0	0
Bruce Guadalupe Community School	K-8	520	24	496	0	5	24	491
Ceria Travis Academy	6-8	81	0	81	0	74	0	7
Community Vision Academy LTC	K-3	59	0	59	0	32	0	27
D.L. Hines Academy of Excellence	K-2	109	2	107	1	86	1	21
Early View Academy of Excellence	K-6	210	2	208	2	201	0	7
Eastbrook Academy	K-2	47	28	19	5	9	23	10
Family Academy	K-3	46	0	46	0	46	0	0
Family Montessori	K-3	60	2	58	1	43	1	15
Harambee Community School	K-8	394	0	394	0	316	0	78
Hickman's Academy Prep School	K-2	109	0	109	0	109	0	0
Keal Preparatory School	K-8	19	0	19	0	14	0	5
Lakeshore Montessori	K	29	13	16	3	5	10	11
Learning Enterprise High School	HS	210	1	209	0	120	1	89
Marva Collins Prep School	K-5	221	4	217	2	189	2	28
Medgar Evers Academy	K-8	107	0	107	0	107	0	0
Milwaukee Multicultural Academy	K-8	119	0	119	0	119	0	0
Seeds of Health - Grandview High	HS	206	79	127	4	9	75	118
Seeds of Health - Hilltop Elem	K-1	96	34	62	21	28	13	34
Sherman Park Pre-School	K	41	3	38	1	27	2	11
Tamarack Community School	K-7	124	93	31	47	28	46	3
Texas Bufkin Academy	K-5	84	0	84	0	77	0	7
Urban Day School	K-8	513	0	513	0	461	0	52
Woodlands School	K-8	176	111	65	6	38	105	27
Woodson Academy	K-8	215	0	215	0	213	0	2
		4,446	402	4,044	98	2,695	304	1,349

[1] Data are for 30 of 32 non-religious MPCP schools. Data for the Marva Collins School is estimated based on publicly available information. Data for all other schools provided in a survey conducted by The Institute for the Transformation of Learning.

KEY: W = White; M = Minority; CW = Choice White; CM = Choice Minority; NCW = Non-choice White; NCM = Non-choice Minority.

Appendix 2 — Enrollment at Religious MPCP Schools, 1999-00[1]

School	Grade	Students	W	M	CW	CM	NCW	NCM
Beautiful Savior Lutheran School	K-8	76	4	72	1	52	3	20
Believers in Christ Christian Academy	K-12	266	0	266	0	145	0	121
Blessed Sacrament	K-8	213	208	5	17	0	191	5
Blessed Trinity	K-8	252	1	251	0	220	1	31
Catholic East Elementary	K-8	189	114	75	58	58	56	17
Christ Memorial Lutheran School	K-8	105	30	75	8	51	22	24
Clara Muhammed School	K-9	105	4	101	3	90	1	11
Corpus Christi	K-8	150	76	74	30	62	46	12
Divine Savior Holy Angels	HS	538	476	62	0	3	476	59
Emmaus Lutheran School	K-8	129	0	129	0	122	0	7
Gospel Lutheran School	K-8	106	1	105	0	85	1	20
Gregory Flood Christian Academy	K5	9	0	9	0	9	0	0
Holy Redeemer Christian Academy	K-8	300	0	300	0	280	0	20
King's Academy Christian School	K-1	12	0	12	0	9	0	3
Lutheran Special School	2-8	24	12	12	5	6	7	6
Marquette University High School	HS	998	816	182	2	9	814	173
Messmer High School	HS	461	13	448	0	154	13	294
Mother of Good Counsel	K-8	441	292	149	56	44	236	105
Mt. Calvary Lutheran	K-8	197	48	149	18	113	30	36
Nazareth Lutheran	K-6	46	30	16	6	12	24	4
Notre Dame Middle School	5-8	61	0	61	0	61	0	0
Oklahoma Ave. Lutheran School	K-8	81	76	5	19	5	57	0
Our Lady of Good Hope	K-8	204	133	71	17	31	116	40
Our Lady of Sorrows	K-8	172	97	75	24	50	73	25
Our Lady Queen of Peace	K-8	209	161	48	30	20	131	28
Pius XI High School	HS	1477	1277	200	10	18	1267	182
Prince of Peace/Principe De Paz	K-8	302	72	230	38	149	34	81
Resurrection Catholic Academy	K-8	227	42	185	12	128	30	57
Sharon Junior Academy	K-8	60	0	60	0	49	0	11
St. Adalbert	K-8	238	44	194	38	179	6	15
St. Alexander	1-8	126	110	16	11	3	99	13
St. Anthony	K-8	344	4	340	2	229	2	111
St. Bernadette	K-8	211	139	72	15	34	124	38
St. Catherine (51st)	K-8	231	39	192	17	185	22	7
St. Catherine of Alexandria	K-8	214	152	62	39	31	113	31
St. Charles Borromeo	K-8	206	184	22	11	0	173	22
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Academy	K-8	249	210	39	46	9	164	30
St. Gregory the Great	K-8	481	447	34	14	1	433	33
St. Helen	K-8	137	106	31	31	10	75	21
St. Joan Antida	HS	397	154	243	23	70	131	173
St. John Kanty	K-8	164	125	39	43	26	82	13
St. Josaphat	K-8	177	59	118	36	80	23	38
St. Leo Catholic Urban Academy	K-8	249	0	249	0	207	0	42
St. Marcus Evangelical Lutheran	K-8	101	17	84	5	60	12	24
St. Margaret Mary	K-8	454	395	59	32	27	363	32
St. Martini Lutheran	K-8	151	38	113	28	82	10	31

Appendix 2 — Page Two

School	Grade	Students	W	M	CW	CM	NCW	NCM
St. Paul	K-8	155	149	6	11	2	138	4
St. Philip Neri	K-8	193	80	113	37	101	43	12
St. Rafael the Archangel	K-8	115	63	52	22	35	41	17
St. Roman	K-8	467	424	43	20	12	404	31
St. Rose Catholic Urban Academy	K-8	224	7	217	0	168	7	49
St. Sebastian	K-8	451	349	102	41	31	308	71
St. Veronica	K-8	433	388	45	12	2	376	43
St. Vincent Pallotti	K-8	193	157	36	18	9	139	27
Victory Preparatory Academy	K-2	25	0	25	0	25	0	0
Yeshiva Elementary School	K-8	169	166	3	75	3	91	0
		13,965	7,989	5,976	981	3,656	7,008	2,320

Data are for 56 of 58 religious MPCP schools, as provided in a survey conducted by The Institute for the Transformation of Learning.

KEY: W = White; M = Minority; CW = Choice White; CM = Choice Minority; NCW = Non-choice White; NCM = Non-choice Minority.